

Gasterby

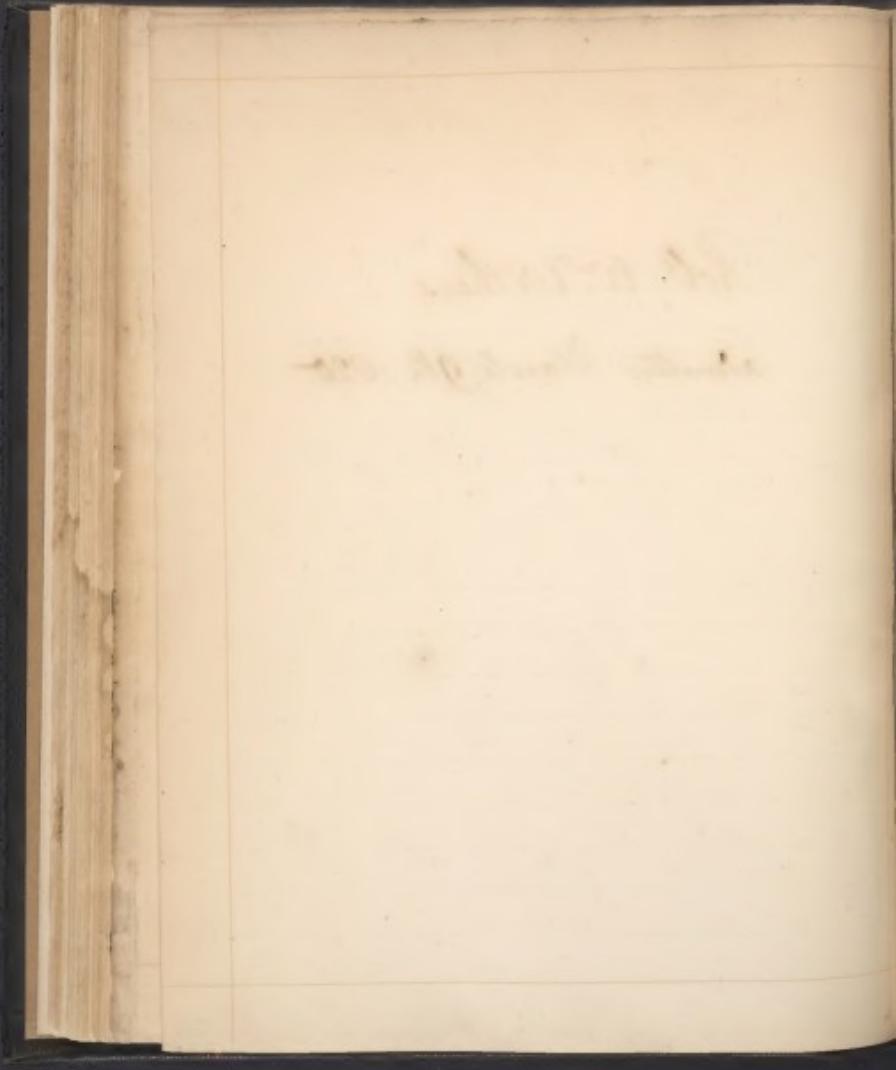
Robt. W. Withers

admitted March 9th 1820

Robert W. Withers

At Mrs. Oliver, 40 Fenchurch Street

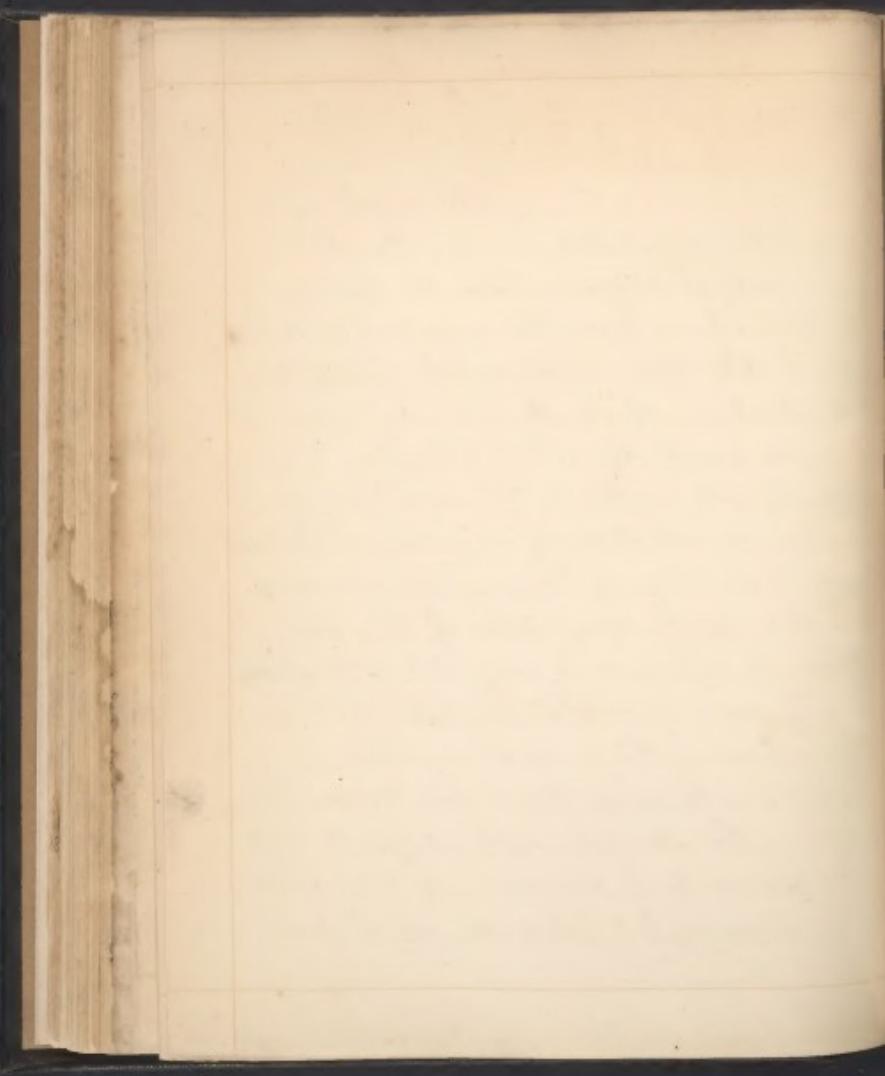
Mr. 30m.



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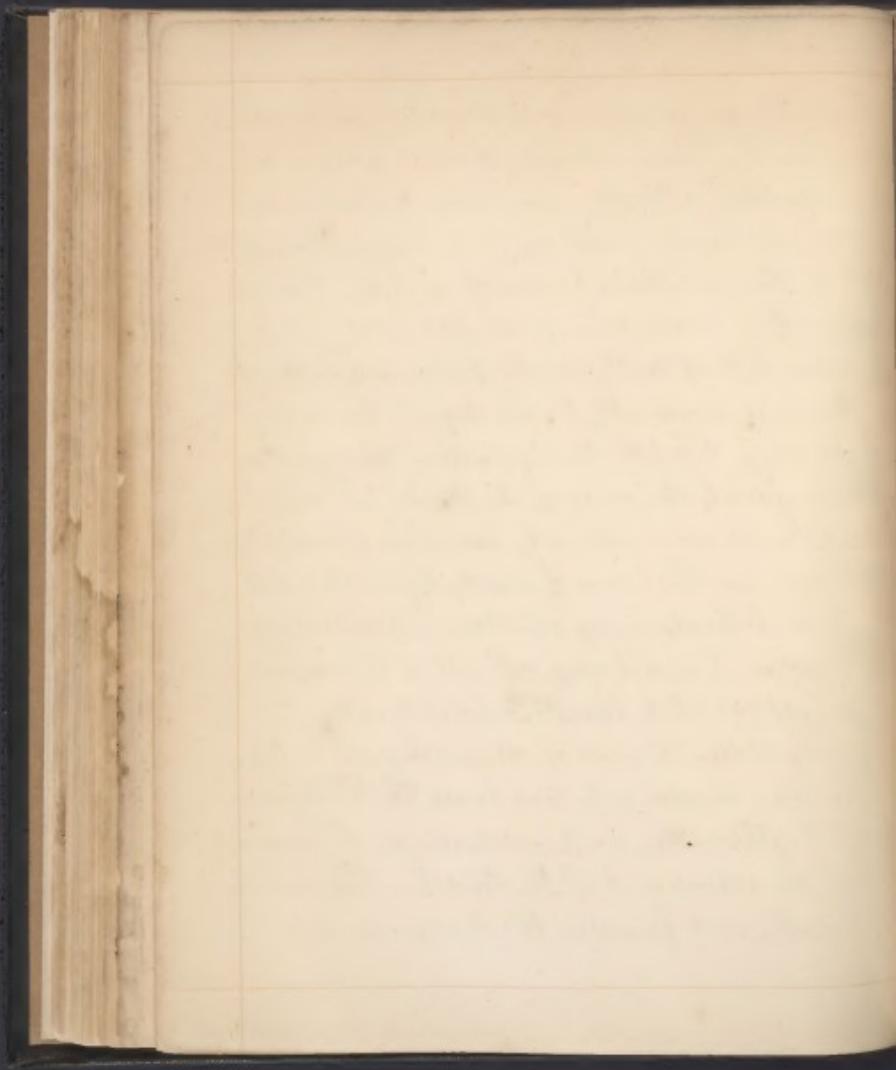
of Gastritis.

The subject is perhaps better calculated to arrest the attention of a medical inquirer, than the diseases of the stomach. - Know the important functions to which this organ is subservient from its central situation. From its intimate, & diversified connections, with the rest of the system, it is very deservedly well entitled to the most particular & attentive consideration, of every one, who pretends to any knowledge of the animal economy. Situated in the very centre of the system, it diffuses its influence to every part of the body. It may indeed be emphatically styled, the "punctum saliens" of the animal machine. - Endowed with sympathies so close & diversified as these, the stomach must necessarily be subjected to a variety of diseases. - Of these not the least alarming, but fortunately, not the most



frequent, is, Gastritis, or inflammation of the stomach. — Than this, few diseases to which the human body is liable, are more violent in their nature, or more fatal in their termination; if left to the unassisted powers of nature. — The unhappy sufferer is sometimes prostrated as it were, by the sudden stroke of death, & without immediate prospect of succour, is irrevocably placed beyond the reach of recovery. But tho' this be sometimes the case, it is not uniformly the mode of its attack. At other times, the disease is extremely irrisidious in its attacks, & undermines the powers of vitality, before the patient is aware of his alarming situation. Most commonly however, it is not very difficult to be recognised by the symptoms which hereafter will be pointed out: —

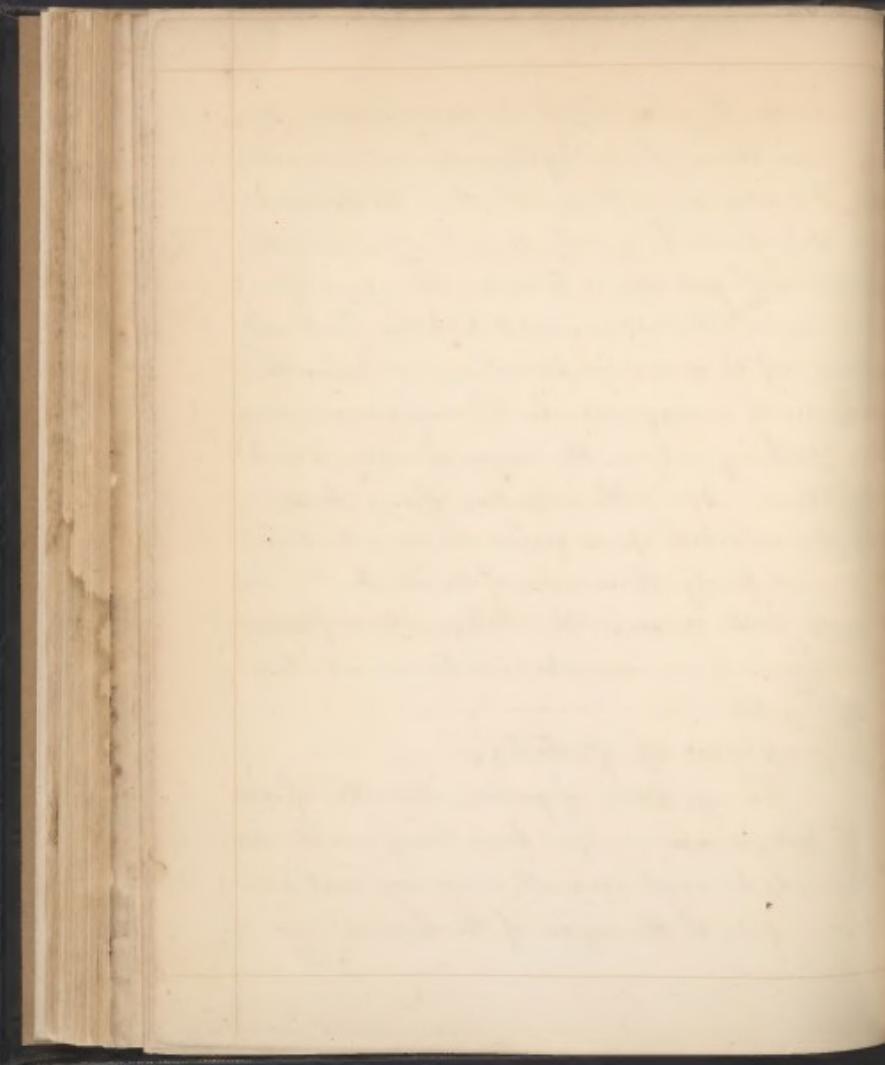
By Cullen, & most of the nosological writers, it has been divided into two kinds, The Phlegmatic, & Erythematic; as it is situated in the nervous, or in the villous coat of the stomach. — This division is probably well founded, tho' it requires more



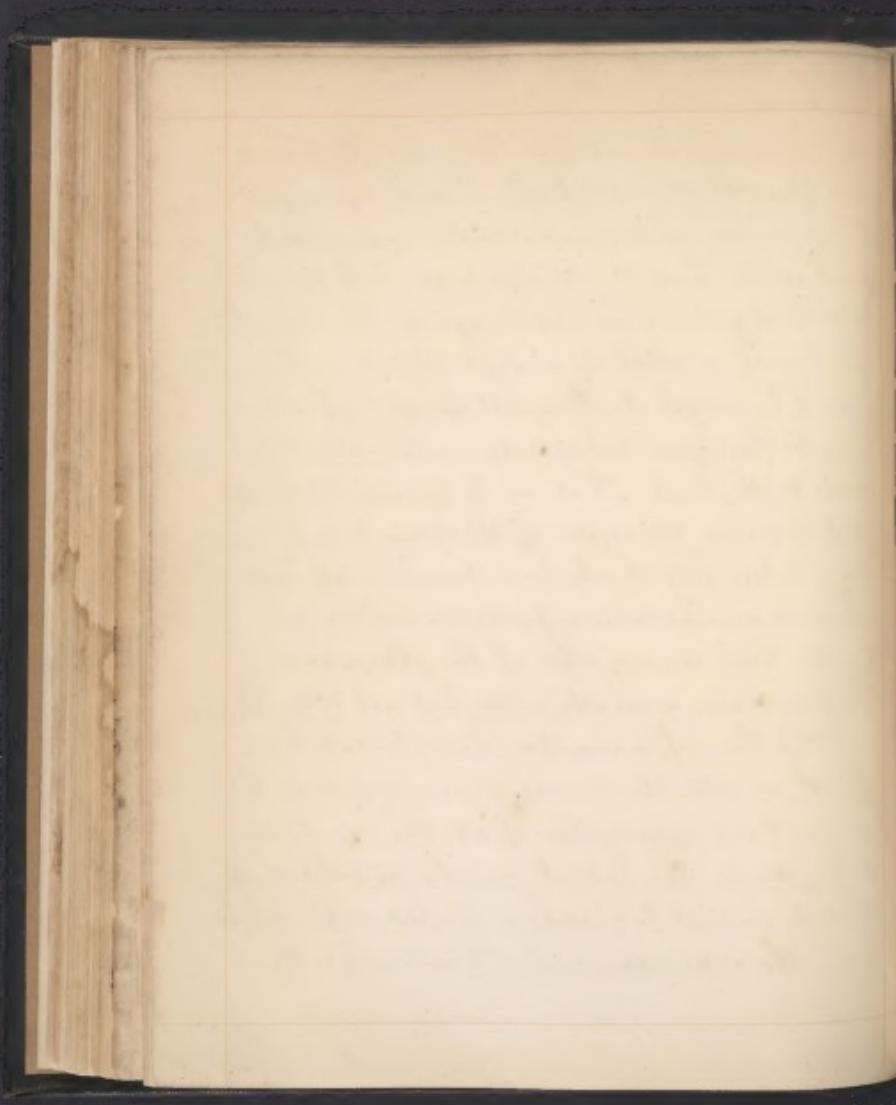
knowledge than we possess to discriminate certainly between them. The Erythematic inflammation is said to occur more frequently than the Phlegmatic; to be more frequently unaccompanied by the symptoms of gastritis or to evince them in a less violent degree. But it is evident, that the greater or less violence of the same symptoms, cannot serve the purposes of a diagnosis; for the same disease might occur, differing only in the degree of violence of its symptoms. — Nor is the distinction of any especial importance, as both species require the same treatment, only modified by the violence of the attack. It is however the latter species, or the Phlegmatic inflammation, to which our remarks will be more particularly directed.

Symptoms of Gastritis.

The symptoms of gastritis, like those of most of the phlegmasies, are far from being complicated. Those which most generally occur, are, acute pain in some part of the region of the stomach—vomiting,

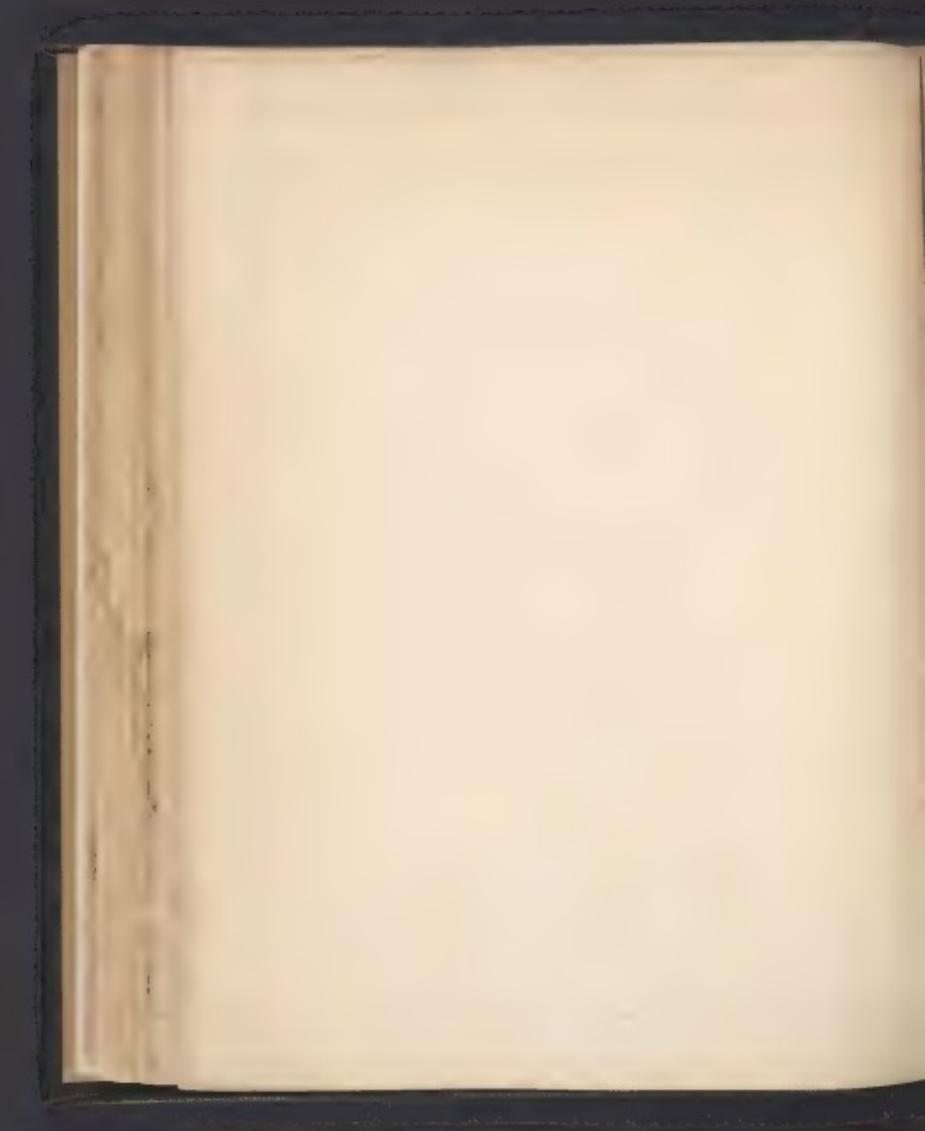


especially when any thing is taken into the stomach
distressing thirst - restlessness - anxiety - pain about
the pectora or scrobiculus cordis - singultus - fre-
quent small, hard & contractile pulse with pain a-
bout the epigastric, & umbilical regions. The pain of
the stomach is extremely acute, & attended with a
sense of burning heat. It is not always confined en-
tirely to this organ, but extends much lower, often
shoots to the back. It is much increased by the slight-
est pressure on the region of the stomach, or by any
thing taken into it, which is immediately rejected. X
There is an uncommon prostration of strength,
greater than in any other of the phlegmasiae.
The bowels are generally costive, but not obstinately
so, unless the inflammation has extended to them.
If not arrested, the disease is very rapid in its
course, & an aggrivation of all these symptoms
takes place. The patient now has so little strength,
that he cannot be raised in his bed, without fail-
ing - the respiration is short & interrupted - the pulse



fable & intermitting. The extremities cold & covered with clammy sweat. Hiccup. & a discharge of black mucus takes place. The whole abdomen is greatly distended with wind, which indicates the approach, or actual presence of gas-pains.

Besides those, which are the more regular symptoms of gastritis there are some anomalies, which are often called delusive symptoms, as pain in the great toe, resembling that of podagra, in the groin or in the pretenda of scrotum, instead latter case it is fatal in proportion to the intensity of the pain. The disease is also attended with hydrocephalus in some instances, & also with a horror of light. These symptoms, when they exist, are sufficient to distinguish gastritis from other affections of the stomach, with which it is most liable to be confounded. In spasms & flatulent humor, the pulse is less affected, the strength is not so suddenly, nor so completely prostrated, the vomiting is not so constant, nor so readily excited by ingesta.



the increase of pain on receiving anything into the stomach, is not so remarkable, nor is the pain increased by pressure on the epigastric region, one of the best diagnostic signs of gastritis. In spasms of the bowels also the pain is supposit, while in gastritis it is more free, & the movements of the patient are sometimes painful.

Such are the most characteristic symptoms of gastritis, & the ways of distinguishing it from other similar affections. But instances sometimes occur, in which the disease is attended with fever, or none of the symptoms which have been enumerated, & it runs its course without being known at all suspected.

Causes of Gastritis.

Fortunately, gastritis is one of the most rare of the phlegmasias. The vicissitudes of body which indicate a tendency to other inflammatory diseases, may also be considered as predisposing to this. Of the occasional, or exciting causes, more perhaps is more common than drinking



larger, of cold water, while the body is much heated.

Any avoid, or stimulating article, taken into the stomach, especially when its mucus is not secreted in sufficient quantity, to protect its coat, or when it is in a vitiated condition may excite gastritis.

Very violent emotions, or exertions may cause it. Especially when frequently repeated. I consider these also may be enumerated poisons.

Things exert a more pernicious influence on the stomach than our digestion, & therefore when indigestible or stimulating foods is taken in very large quantities, it may produce gastritis; or it may come from the excessive use of violent spirits, or it may arise from a blow on the region of the stomach, or from inflammation of the neighbouring parts, applied to it.

Certain plebeial, or malignant fevers, are generally accompanied with gastritis, & this in some contagious diseases, is so uniformly the case, that it is probable, the contagion first makes its attack on the stomach,



propagating on it locally, its deleterious effects.

I know the direct & intimate sympathy which exists between the skin & stomach, inflammation of this organ sometimes supervenes, on the sudden disappearance of a cutaneous eruption.

Such are the more usual causes of gastritis, but it sometimes arises from internal causes which are not so well understood, & affecting the stomach sympathetically. It indeed partakes in almost every affliction of the body, & serves, together with the unceasing prostration of strength, which takes place in this disease, to manifest conclusively, the powerful sympathies which exist between the stomach, & other parts of the body.

Treatment of Gastritis.

From what has already been said, of the nature, violence & speedy termination, of this disease, it is sufficiently evident, that it requires a prompt, decided, and vigorous practice. We have hitherto confined with an acute inflammation, treated in



an organ peculiarly endowed with vitality, and
vivacity, and which, if not speedily arrested, will
certainly prove fatal.

The indications then of cure in this disease are
sufficiently evident. As in the other ~~bleeding~~ diseases blood
letting is the remedy on which we place our chief
reliance; & there is no instance in which it should
be more freely employed than in the present.

Called to a cure in the early stage of this disease,
we must promptly apply the lancet, and deplete
freely, and copiously, or all is lost. Regardless of the
state of the pulse, & of the apparent prostration of
strength, we must deplete as freely as the nature of
the case requires taking XX or XXX or of blood at one
bleeding, and repeating the operation in the course
of a few hours, if the violence of the inflammatory
symptoms, does not abate. The blood should not only
be drawn frequently & copiously, but it should be
abstracted suddenly. In this way, it produces a
much more decided & beneficial impression, than



when taken gradually, or in small quantities.

nothing so more pernicious than the practice of purging, & repeated bleedings, in the acute bilious disease, as recommended by some authors. We should indeed be removing mucus, and preparing during the existence of our patient, were we to trust to small bleedings, to arrest an inflammation so violent and septic in its course, as that of the stomach. Before all, we are not to take the pulse for our guide, for so far from letting blood only when it is full and strong, the smaller, & weaker it is considered the disease is the further, the more violent, & dangerous it becomes.

In other cases of biliousness, venesection is employed to diminish the force of the pulse; but in the present instance, it is employed with directly the opposite intention, and it is exactly in proportion to its violence, that it is beneficial. It is one of the peculiarities of this inflammation, that the strength, & more particularly, that of the circulation, is so completely prostrated, that there is little, or no fever.



It is one of those cases, which have been so largely distributed by Dr Rush, as a depraved state of the system attending upon an excess of stimulus. But as we draw blood the powers of the system are reduced the hardness of the pulse diminishes its strength and fulness increase, & we now have a case of open inflammation to deal with. But the event is even sometimes more favourable than this, and it is not unusual for the symptoms of gastritis, immediately to disappear on the loss of a large quantity of blood, suddenly abstracted. Such a desirable termination however, is too apt to prove delusive, and should not induce us to abate our vigilance; as the recovery of the disease frequently happens to a greater or less extent.

The repetition of blood letting must be more frequent and copious in this than in almost any other case of inflammation. Exactly in proportion to the violence of the disease, is the lancet to be boldly and repeatedly employed. It is here emphatically the author of hope; and we must adhere pertinaciously to



as all is lost. The less the remission, in the symptoms after the first bleeding, the sooner & to the greater extent must it be repeated. Nor are we to forget, that in gestation more particularly, the danger of delaying the resection, is in a high degree imminent, for the system sometimes sinks so rapidly, and the circulation becomes so languid, that even in a few hours, it becomes impossible, to obtain the proper quantity of blood.

After general, we may sometimes resort with advantage to Topical bloodletting, by means of cups or leeches applied over the region of the stomach. It is more particularly adapted to those cases of sympathetic gestation, in which general bloodletting to any extent is unadmissible, or at least an unprofitable practice. But in violent cases it should never be used to the exclusion of general bleeding. -

Where by these means we have overcome the languor of the pulse, and sufficiently restored action & excitement, the most decided advantage, may be



derived from the application of a blister. It should be applied over the whole of the ingesta region. I suffered to remain over till it draws perfectly. The principle on which it here acts, is lost by intelligible. It is on the principle of respiration, or that law of the animal economy, by which a very strong inspiration made in one part has the effect of drawing, or eliciting towards it, another inspiration made in the contiguous parts. By this means, the inflammation of the stomach is drawn to the contiguous surface of the body, where the evaporation is comparatively of no moment. But it is important that the blisters be large & sufficed as near as possible to the affected parts. Large blisters occasion very little, if any more inconvenience, than small ones. They are essential in proportion to their dimensions.

As co-operating to the same and similar operations, applied to the abdomen are those of cold. They are more so, in inflammations of the abdomen and than in those of the thorax or viscera.



At last however, they are too feeble to combat a disease so violent and dangerous, as gastritis. I should not be employed to the exclusion of more active medicine. They should be applied in such a manner as to render any motion on the part of the patient unnecessary, and may therefore consist of large bladders of warm water, or of other bags of specious liquids, or hot water.

While treating of the symptoms of gastritis, it was observed, that the bowels are sometimes active, tho' not abnormally so, and it is therefore necessary to give them. But from the extreme irritability of the stomach we are precluded from giving many things by the mouth, and it becomes necessary to resort to Osmotic injections.

To prevent irritation, they should be extremely mild, and as they are to act medicinally by stimulating the bowels, they must be thrown upon large quantities.

As soon as the irritability of the stomach



inflammation, the best remedy is lime water and milk, combined and given in small quantities frequently repeated. This may be aided by large and dryne injections. They sooth pain abate the irritability and induce general composure.

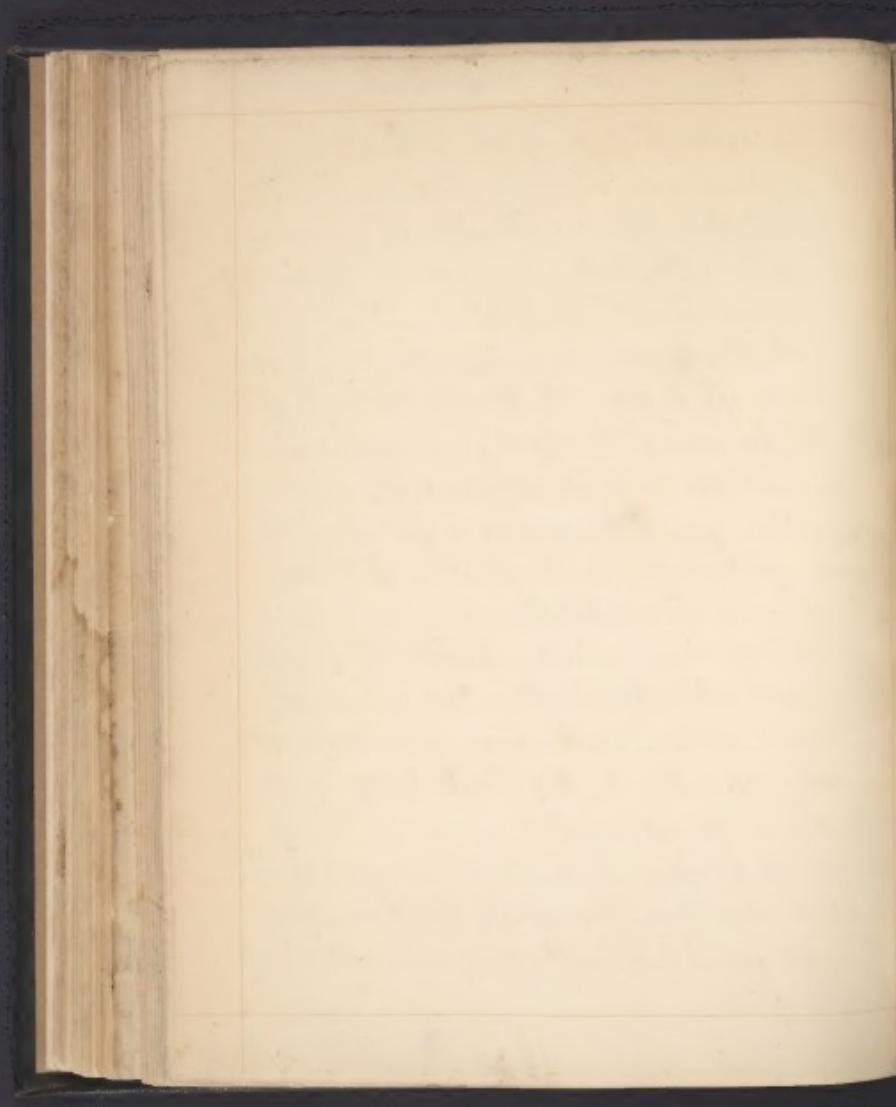
At this period, we may expect the most beneficial effects from the Warm Bath. It, effects after the free use of the softening remedies, generally most decidedly advantageous, by inducing perspiration, giving the disease a centrifugal direction, and rendering the situation of the patient altogether more comfortable. —

To remove as much as possible, the urgent thirst, with which the patient is tormented, nothing answers so well, as milk, given in small quantities now at short intervals. We should, by all means, guard against administering large quantities of demulcent drinks which by exciting the Senses produce vomiting. I saw, up, the patient exceedingly, of small quantity of milk, toast and water or some



is allayed, sufficiently to enable it to retain any thing. Oil, or Calomel, are to be administered, to assist the operation of the emetics. Of these, the calomel is decidedly to be preferred, as it is less disagreeable to the stomach, and may be given, even while it is inflamed, without any danger of aggravating the complaint. It is even said to remove inflammation by producing a new & peculiar action, on the surface of the stomach. — To calomel, the article next to be preferred, is, the Epsom Salts. This, of all the saline purgatives, is least offensive to the stomach, and will sometimes be retained, when all other articles are rejected. —

To allay irritation of the stomach should from the very commencement of the disease, demand our attention. But the stomach is at first too irritable to receive any thing into it, and the remedies most effectual, are perhaps those which have already been mentioned. After however they have been sufficiently employed to moderate the excessive irritability, and



nils a cooling drink, will be much more effectual in allaying thirst and irritability. Have the largest quantities of demulcent drinks.—

When however the occurrence of gastritis is apprehended, Spirits of Turpentine, in large doses must be resorted to.—

Such then, as have been detailed are those remedies for gastritis, arising from ordinary causes. But after all venesection, and blisters are the remedies most to be relied on. By the intrepid use of the lancet, in the early stage of the disease, and the subsequent application of a large blister, over the epigastric region, we shall most commonly triumph over this most alarming disorder.—

